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February 19, 2003 LB 561

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Baker, to open on advancement of LB 561 to E & R Initial.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. This bill, LB 561, was brought to the Transportation Committee by the Department of Motor Vehicles. It is one of those bills that tries to harmonize some things and gets us into compliance. But it's dealing, specifically, with the Division of Motor Carrier Services and it makes two changes. The first one is it authorizes the department to participate in the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Program and it's referred to as the Performance and Registration Information System Management, PRISM for short. It was...the PRISM program came about in 1988 through Congress, and it was modified in 1991. The purpose of this program is to link state registration data...or the purpose of the bill is to link state registration data with the commercial motor carriers safety data; identify high-risk carriers and actively monitor safety progress of those carriers and improve enforcement by providing sanctions. That's what the PRISM act does that's mandated through Congress. It's a safety issue. This bill would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to revoke or refuse issuance of the state-issued registration of any carrier found to be unsafe by the federal government. And all due process of this revocation would be handled at the federal level. Nebraska would make the revocation information available then to the other jurisdictions. It is funded through 100 percent federal grants to the state. And as I said, it's trying to get us up to speed with the federal requirements on the safety side of it. The second part of the bill deals with commercial motor vehicle registrations, and that's through the International Registration Plan, which is an outgrowth of the North American Free Trade Agreement where we have more and more Mexican and Canadian trucks going through. They're working and hauling into the United States. This second part of the bill would update those commercial motor vehicle registration statutes, something we need to do. Currently, we cannot issue a trip permit for a trucking company that originates out of Mexico. This would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to do that. So it's a rather mundane bill, something we need to do to get up to speed with today's transportation issues, and I would